

## Tips for Writing Measurable Performance Standards

### A Good Measurable Standard Is . . . .

- **Specific and objective.** It should be clearly written, be free from ambiguities/bias/personal feelings or opinions, and contain finite measures that specify the line between satisfactory work and less-than-satisfactory work. A measurable standard should also allow room for an employee to exceed the satisfactory level. Additionally, whenever possible, use ranges when setting numeric measures.
- **Mission related.** The measurable standard should directly link the required performance of the job.
- **Nondiscriminatory.** The measurable standard should be able to be consistently applied to all personnel in the same or similar position or grade with the same authority. Although the standards may be the same for similar positions, the measures should reflect the grade level of the employee.
- **Observable.** You must be realistically able to observe and monitor the performance to ascertain whether the measurable standard has been met. Those observations should be based on measurable outcomes in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost-effectiveness.
- **Written to the Fully Successful level.** Measurable standards should reflect the required level of performance and expected results for the job. A fully experienced and competent employee will consistently achieve or meet the standards for the job given circumstances within his or her control.

### Types of Measures . . . .

- **Qualitative measures** refer to the accuracy, appearance, or usefulness of the work effort. For example, typical quality measures may focus on the number of errors allowable on customer satisfaction surveys.
- **Quantitative measures** refer to the number of products produced, services provided, or a general result. They are expressed in terms of numbers, percentages, frequencies, etc.
- **Timeliness measures** refer to completion times and are usually expressed as how quickly, when, or by what date an employee produces the work.
- **Cost-effectiveness measures** refer to dollar savings or cost control for the Government that can be documented and measured in Agency annual fiscal year budgets. Cost-effectiveness measures may include maintaining or reducing unit costs, reducing the time it takes to produce or provide a product or service, or reducing waste.
- **Manner of Performance** refers to the conditions in which an individual's behavior has an effect on performance, i.e., assists other employees in the work unit in accomplishing assignments.

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### Measurable Standards Job Aid (continued)

#### Tips for Developing Measurable Standards . . . .

To determine the type(s) of measure(s) that might be appropriate for each task, think about the following questions.

- Is quality important? Does the stakeholder or customer care how well the work is done?
- Is quantity important? Does the stakeholder or customer care how many items are produced?
- Is it important to accomplish the element by a certain time or date?
- Is it important to accomplish the element within certain cost limits?
- What measures are already available?

#### Tips for Evaluating the Measurable Standard . . . .

Evaluate the tasks using a combination of descriptive and numeric measurements. **Numeric measures** are easy to verify and provide a quantifiable, objective tool. Numeric measures should be presented as ranges instead of exact numbers or percentages. **Descriptive measures** have three components: an observer, what the observer looks for, and a verifiable description of what would represent meeting expectations.

Think about the following questions to evaluate the measurable standards for each task:

- How could quality, quantity, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and/or manner of performance be evaluated?
- Is there some number or percent that could be tracked?

If the task does not lend itself to being evaluated with numbers but can only be described, ask:

- Who could judge that the expectations of the element were met?
- What factors would they look for?